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The Cleveland Indians of tomorrow are playing in the Minor Leagues today. Check out their progress through this in-depth summary of performances in 2001.



Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

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# GAME FACE

INDIANAS SCOREBOOK MAGAZINE

"Go-To Guy"  
JIM THOME



Spring Training 2002  
Program 1- Thome \$5.00



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



We had a successful season in 2001. We won our division for the sixth time in seven years, but we failed in our ultimate goal in winning the World Series. It has become clear to myself and Mark Shapiro and his staff that while beating the opposition into submission may win you a division, it is not going to carry you to a World Championship.

What the Arizona Diamondbacks and New York Yankees have displayed over the last four years is that you win with pitching and defense while stocking your roster with "winning" players that have both talent and character and play with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm.

I also want our players to want to come to the Ballpark everyday. I want our players to want their teammates to be successful, and I want our players to come to the Ballpark both ready to play and ready to win. I want them to play every game like it's the first game of the season – with energy and enthusiasm – a team that is going to make the fans of Cleveland and myself proud of their players.

Another thing that has become apparent over the last several years is that our lack of depth among upper-level, position-player prospects was eventually going to catch up to us at the Major League level. While it was difficult to trade a potential Hall-of-Famer in

Roberto Alomar, I feel that we added some quality players to our Major League roster in RF Matt Lawton and RHP Jerrod Riggan and helped build the depth of our organization with the addition of OF Alex Escobar, LHP Billy Traber, and 1B Earl Snyder.

I feel with our core group of players of Jim Thome, Ellis Burks, Omar Vizquel, Einar Diaz, and Travis Fryman still intact along with the new additions of Lawton, Ricky Gutierrez, and Brady Anderson – coupled with our matured and improved pitching staff – will provide our club with the leadership and talent needed to win the American League Central Division in 2002.

# Winning In Different Ways

A Prospectus for the 2002 Season from Tribe Manager Charlie Manuel

*Manuel will look for players like Omar Vizquel, below left, and newcomer Matt Lawton, below right, to reach base often – and score via singles and doubles – not three-run homers.*



Photo: Gregory Drezdon



Courtesy of the Minnesota Twins



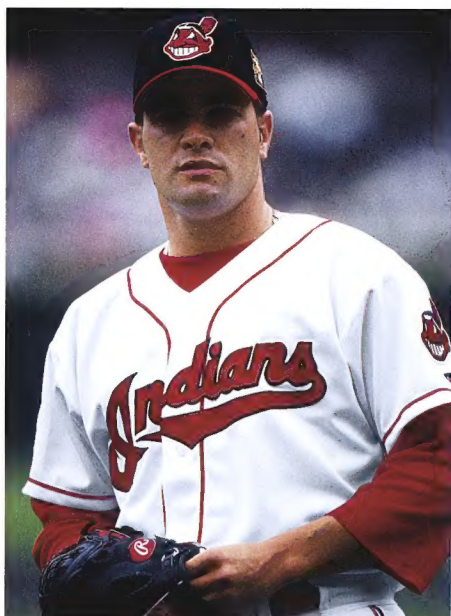


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

*Danys Baez will move to the Tribe's starting rotation.*

We have also added three new coaches to the staff for the upcoming campaign. With the addition of Eddie Murray, Robby Thompson, and Mike Brown to the staff, I feel that we have one of the most respected, talented, and hard-working staffs in the game today. Hitting Coach Eddie Murray's credentials in this game are unmatched – he will receive instant respect from our hitters. Eddie and I had lockers next to each other during his tenure here as a player as he was our key veteran leader during our 1995 American League title. Robby Thompson was one of the most fearless players I ever saw – I look for him to instill that attitude and energy into our players as he coaches our infielders and first base. Mike Brown has done more to develop our young pitching staff than anyone, spending the last seven seasons as our Minor League pitching coordinator. Grady Little (Bench Coach), Joel Skinner (Third Base), and Luis Isaac (Bullpen Coach) have been with me during my entire tenure as manager and are irreplaceable to me.

The question most often asked of me as we head into the 2002 season is "how are we going to score runs" with the departures of Alomar, Kenny Lofton, Juan Gonzalez, and Marty Cordova. My answer is that we need to score in different ways this year. Lawton will either slide into Lofton's leadoff spot or Alomar's number three spot in the order while newcomer Ricky Gutierrez, who hit .290 with a career-high 66 RBI, will either bat second or seventh. We need Jim Thome and a healthy

Ellis Burks to produce in the middle of the order – with guys like Lawton, Gutierrez, Omar Vizquel, and Einar Diaz setting the table for them by having a high on-base percentage, moving runners, and stealing bases. Also, Travis Fryman, who is coming into Spring Training healthy, and the combination of Russell Branyan and Brady Anderson in left field should produce some runs for us. Milton Bradley will bat toward the bottom of the lineup as he enters his first full season in the big leagues.

While looking for other ways to score in 2002, I believe our pitching will be improved from last year as our young core pitchers continue to mature and develop into quality Major League pitchers.

Bartolo Colon has worked hard in the off-season and promises to come into camp in the best shape of his career. Bartolo won 14 games last year, and I look for him to improve on that.

Second-year lefthander C.C. Sabathia, who exceeded all expectations in 2001 by winning 17 games for us, will be counted upon to carry a bigger innings load in 2002.

We need to keep Chuck Finley healthy enough to make at least 30 starts this year after he spent two different stints on the disabled list last year.

Danys Baez was arguably our most valuable pitcher in the second half of last season (5-3, 2.91 ERA, league-high 38 games) after being converted to relief in Spring Training. I have decided to move Danys into the rotation in 2002. In addition to his competitive makeup, I think he has one of the most explosive fastballs in the league, and his split has developed into a quality pitch. Danys can be a successful pitcher for us this year if he can keep hitters off balance and we can monitor his workload.

Charles Nagy and Jaret Wright, who are attempting to overcome two straight years of arm problems, will compete with the encouraging Ryan Drese, Jake Westbrook, and Tim Drew for the fifth spot in our rotation. All of them potentially can fill our long relief role in the bullpen. Look for Billy Traber, acquired from the Mets and a former first-round

pick, to start the year in AA Akron or AAA Buffalo. I am also going to get a look at Jason Stanford and Jason Phillips, pitchers developed in our system by our new Pitching Coach, Mike Brown.

Bringing back Bob Wickman was our most vital move of the off-season. There is nothing more deflating to a club than playing your heart out for 8.0 innings only to have it blown in the ninth with an unreliable closer. Bob Wickman was outstanding for us last year, saving 91% of his save chances. Bob loves the pressure that comes with the territory of being a closer, and he is a tremendous influence on our young pitchers.

Paul Shuey will be our prime set-up man along with free agent acquisition Mark Wohlers. Both guys have the stuff to be closers and both relish having the ball with the game on the line. Ricardo Rincon had an outstanding year for us last year as he made a career-high 67 appearances. Those three guys along with Wickman give us as reliable of a

*Ellis Burks' leadership and bat skills will be in great demand.*

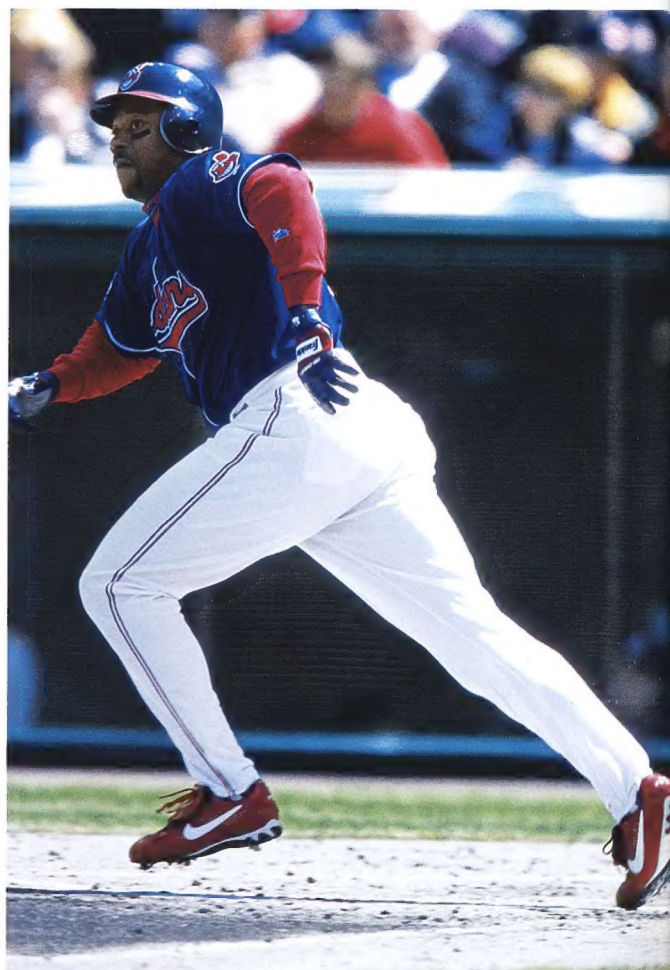


Photo: Gregory Drezdson



back-end bullpen as there is in baseball. It will be the strength of our team.

David Riske and Jerrod Riggan will further deepen our 'pen.' Riske really stepped up for us toward the end of the season and in the playoffs against Seattle. Riggan, who has an above average fastball and power slider, was a key acquisition in the Mets deal, and he will go straight into a middle-relief role. Scott Radinsky, a healthy Sean DePaula, Roy Smith,

*Charlie Manuel, below with Einar Diaz, will depend on timely hitting and improved pitching. Jim Thome, right, will be looked to for RBI.*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

and Chad Paronto will all be closely looked at in Spring Training and are capable of making the team.

Infield defense will continue to be a strength of the club. Omar Vizquel has won nine straight Rawlings Gold Glove Awards and is as good as anyone I have ever seen with the glove. We are going to need Omar to get on base and steal more bases this year.

Newly acquired Ricky Gutierrez has twice led National League shortstops in fielding percentage and is more familiar with second base than people realize. His offensive numbers have increased in each of the last three seasons after a career-high 66 RBI last year for the Cubs. Having those two guys up the middle will be a huge benefit for our young pitchers.

Travis Fryman, another former Gold Glover, is healthy heading into Spring Training and is as good as anyone in our league at that position. If he can approach his team MVP numbers from 2000, that would be tremendous for us.

Jim Thome, who had a career-high 124 RBI last year, is underrated and steady at first base



and can potentially be our clean-up hitter along with DH Ellis Burks. Ellis would have approached 30 HR and 100 RBI last year if he did not break his thumb – I look for him to put up those kinds of numbers for us in 2002.

Jolbert Cabrera can play six different positions well and is among the most underrated players in the American League while the sure-handed John McDonald is out of options and will be given every chance to make the club.

Matt Lawton, one of the key players in the Robbie Alomar deal, will play right field for us. I see Matt batting third or perhaps leading

*continued, see Winning Ways, page 16*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Manuel says "Jolbert Cabrera [above] can play six different positions well and is among the most underrated players in the American League." Cabrera, who produced the winning hit in the Indians historic come-from-behind victory over the Mariners last July, will be counted upon for his bat as well as his glove in 2002.



# Winning Ways

*continued from page 10*

off. He stole 29 bases last year and drove in 88 runs in 2000, so I look for him to be a weapon in our offense. Russell Branyan and Brady Anderson will patrol left field for us while Ellis Burks, Wil Cordero, and Karim Garcia may also see time in left field. Russ will also spell Travis Fryman at third and Brady will be our back-up centerfielder. Russ can be a run producer for us if he can cut down on his strikeouts and put the ball in play more while we look for Brady to rebound from a sub-par 2001 with Baltimore.

*While new faces will dot the Tribe lineup, well-known talents (clockwise from top, Fryman, Branyan, and Diaz) will be relied upon as well.*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



# Focus On The **Next** Generation

## 2001 Minor League Highlights

The Cleveland Indians Minor League Organization finished 2001 with a regular season overall record of 382-321 (.543) and ranked 4th in the organizational standings.

The Buffalo Bisons and Kinston Indians were the only two teams in the organizational system who qualified for post-season play. The Buffalo Bisons captured their fourth Division Title in the last five years as they topped the North Division of the International League. The Bisons, however, were eliminated by Scranton Wilkes-Barre three games to two in the first round of the International League playoffs. It was the second year in a row that the Bisons were eliminated by Scranton in the first round.

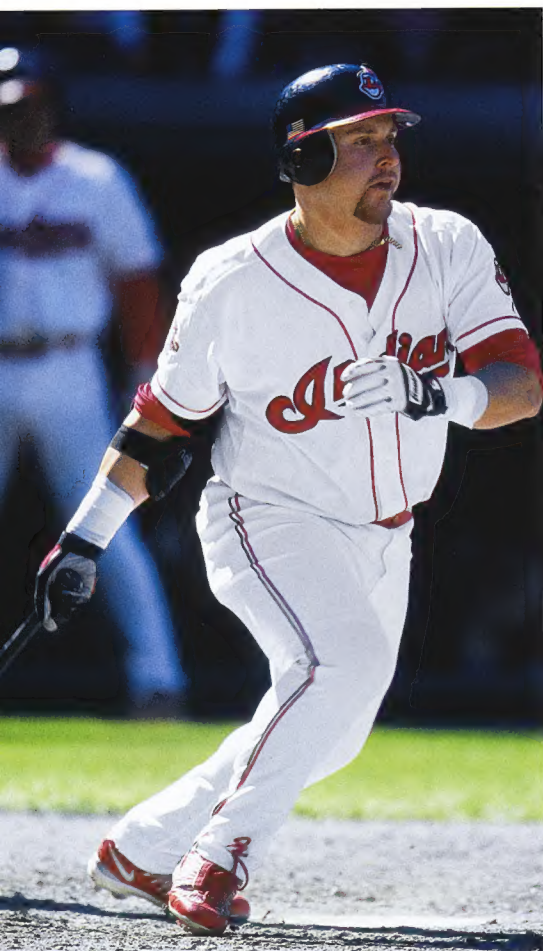


Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

The Kinston Indians qualified for the Carolina League playoffs as they captured both the first- and second-half Southern Division titles. The Indians were eliminated in the Carolina League playoffs by Salem two games to one.

The Buffalo Bisons were represented at the AAA All-Star Game by right-hand pitcher Roy Smith. Lefthander Matt White was the Aeros lone representative at the AA All-Star Game. Kinston was represented by catcher Victor Martinez, infielder Nate Grindell, outfielder Eric Johnson, and left-hand pitcher Alex Herrera in the Carolina League/California League All-Star Game. Infielder Henry Pichard, outfielder Ryan Church, righthander Ryan Larson, and southpaw Dan Neil represented the RedStixx in the South Atlantic League All-Star Game.



### "AAA" BUFFALO BISONS (91-51)

The Buffalo Bisons kick-started their 2001 season by winning their first six games and nine of their first 11. The Herd finished the month of April with a 15-8 record. Buffalo streaked into the All-Star break 20 games over .500 and with the best record in all of AAA baseball at 55-33.

Even with constant shuffling of their roster between Cleveland, the Bisons still managed to finish the regular season with a 91-51 record, while capturing their fourth division title in the last five years. The Bisons 91 victories set a modern-era club record, and their .641 winning percentage was the fourth best winning percentage in club history.

Buffalo finished tied for eighth in the International League in batting with a .259 average. The Bisons pitching staff had a team ERA of 3.59, which was third best in the league.

Buffalo Manager Eric Wedge was named the International League Manager of the Year. Wedge guided the Bisons to a 91-51 record in his first season with the Herd and the fourth as a manager in the Cleveland farm system. In addition, Wedge was named the Best Managerial Prospect in the International League by *Baseball America*.

Infielder Greg LaRocca had a solid season with the Bisons after spending the first 31 games of the season at Akron. LaRocca com-

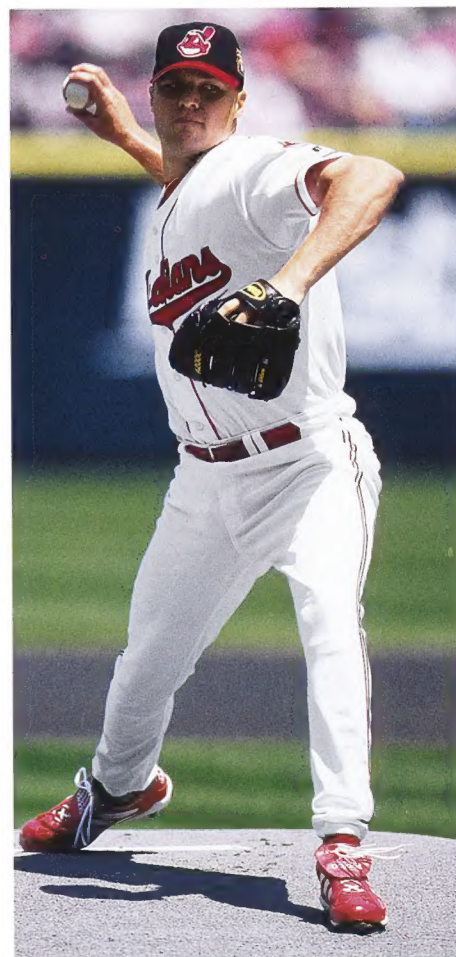


Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

Up-and-comers who tasted the big leagues in 2001 include (left to right) Karim Garcia, Jake Westbrook, (facing page) Roy Smith, and David Riske.





Photo: Gregory Drezdson

bined to hit .320 with 15 HR and 56 RBI. The .320 average was second best in the organization. As a Bison, LaRocca took a liking to Dunn Tire Park, as he hit .347 at home. He drove in four runs three times last season.

Catcher Tim Laker batted .247 with 20 HR and 57 RBI in 86 games with the Bisons. His 20 HR were second most on the team and his 57 RBI were third most. From June 8 to August 9, Laker belted 10 HR in 15 games.

Outfielder Karim Garcia hit just .216 during the first three months of the season, then was red hot for the remainder of the season. Garcia batted .330 in July and August, while blasting 20 HR and 46 RBI during those two months. For the season, Garcia hit .264 with 31 HR and 85 RBI. He led the Bisons in games played (125), runs (73), home runs (31) and RBI (85). From July 15 through the remainder of the season, Garcia collected at least one hit in 36 of 44 games. He finished second in the International League in homers and third in the league in RBI.

Infielder Tony Medrano was consistent for the Bisons, as he batted .290 with seven HR and 52 RBI in 121 games. Medrano pounded out 135 hits, second most in the Indians organization. Medrano had hitting streaks of ten,

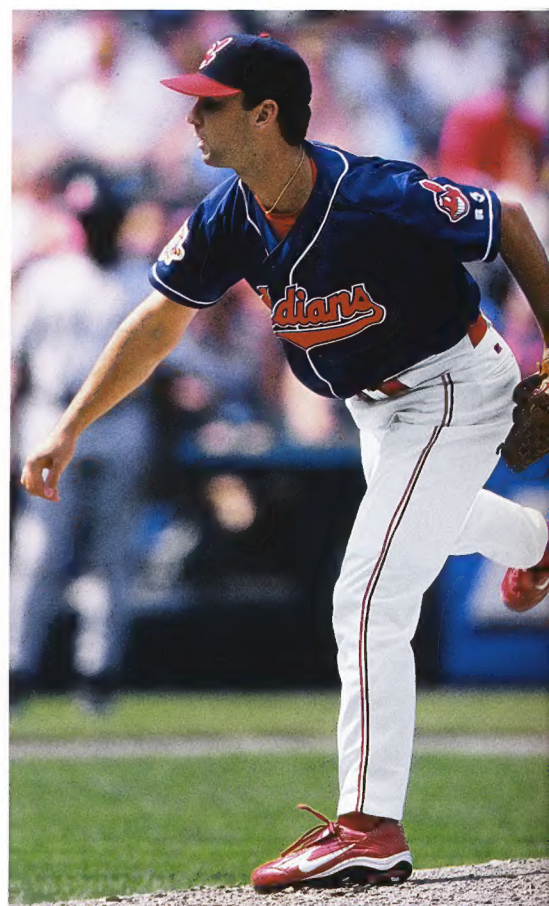


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Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Milton Bradley will play nearly every day in center field. He is an exceptional outfielder who also needs to put the ball in play more to utilize his speed. Eddie Murray is going to be a tremendous tool for Milton and Russell to use this year.

For the first time in several years, Spring Training is going to be pretty interesting for us. The fifth spot in the rotation and long man in the bullpen are up for grabs as are the at-bats in left field. Also, seeing the conversion of Dany's Baez back from relief and the five new players from the New York Mets is exciting to me and should be to our fans as well. I am really looking forward to working with this team. We are going to play with a renewed energy and look to score in ways other than the three-run homer – while building around our young pitching.

I look forward to seeing you at the Ballpark this year!

*Bob Wickman **loves** to get the ball in pressure situations – undoubtedly a necessary trait for a reliable closer.*



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Ten little, nine little, eight little Indians (Sandy Alomar, Jr., Carlos Baerga, Albert Belle). Seven little, six little, five little Indians (Paul Sorrento, Wayne Kirby, Herbert Perry). Four little, three little, two little Indians (Kenny Lofton, Manny Ramirez, Jeromy Burnitz). One little Indians position player . . .

Jim Thome.

When one gets right down to cases, technically, there is only one Indians position player, just one everyday Tribesman, who has ridden the decade-long Indians roller coaster from 105 losses in 1991 through six Central Division titles in seven years.

Jim Thome. The Indians "Go-To Guy."

"When I first signed, I just hoped I could make it to the big leagues," Thome says. "Then, as I worked my way through the Minors and saw what it took to make it to the big leagues – the closer I got to the Majors – I set my goal to play in the big leagues for 10 years."

Mission accomplished. Congratulations, Jim, you've made it.

If one wants to split hairs concerning Thome's longevity, one might have a case – technically, that is. Thome has accrued nine full big league seasons (and 42 days of service

toward a tenth) as the 2002 campaign begins. However, Thome has also appeared in a Cleveland uniform for 11 straight calendar years, making his Major League debut on September 4, 1991.

So when one looks at what Thome has accomplished since then, who's going to quibble about a fraction of a season?

Thome became the Indians all-time home-run leader early last season, passing Albert Belle's mark of 242, establishing a career total of 282 as the new season begins. Since becoming a regular in 1994, Thome has averaged 34 homers per season. Clearly in his prime – he

# He's the "Go-To Guy"



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

by Bill Needle

## Indians First Baseman Jim Thome . . .

*is a well-known figure to Tribe fans. After 10 years in Cleveland, he not only is the club's all-time home-run leader, but he personifies what so many fans are looking for in a sports hero – someone who is plain-spoken (not in-your-face), hard-working (not expecting special treatment), and who plays for love of the game.*

turns 32 in August – Thome's per season average could put him close to the magic number of 500 career home runs by the age of 37, a realistic projection.

"But, you know?" Thome asks. "What matters to me most about that record isn't so much that I've hit 200, or 300, or however many homers. It matters that I've had a chance to play my entire career in the same uniform."

"Yeah, sure, it's a great honor. There are some great hitters on that list of career homers. But when people look at me and say, 'He's the top home-run hitter in Indians history,' I also want them to remember I was here for my entire career. That I never left."

Thome reveals more than a bit of his personality in that attitude. Perhaps his sense of loyalty, his Central Illinois roots, and his strong family upbringing contribute as much as his performance on the field to his reputation within the Indians organization as the "Go-To Guy."

"Jimmy gets it," says Tribe VP of Public Relations Bob DiBiasio. "A lot of people know he does the 'Santa' thing around Christmas, giving presents to kids who are hospitalized during the holidays. But he does much more, and how he does it is what's so impressive."

"Some people cultivate an image. Jimmy's image is who he is. It's amazing how even-

tempered he is, given all we ask him to do. And we do count on him to do so much with the fans and the media. He's the guy the fans go to, the guy we go to, the guy the media goes to."

Typically, Thome accepts his involvement, but downplays it at the same time. "A lot of our guys do a lot in the community. We know how people see us – and we know we have a responsibility that goes with our position in the community."

In 2002, one of Thome's bigger responsibilities in his second decade as an Indian is to help maintain the continuity that keeps fans identifying with the Tribe. The Indians are in





Photo: Gregory Drezdson

the midst of a roster makeover unlike few in franchise annals. Only Omar Vizquel, who became a Tribesman in 1994, and Thome remain from the starting eight that won

Cleveland's first Central Division Championship just seven seasons ago.

"When you play with a group of guys, it's just so much fun while you're playing, that

you never think about how long you'll be together," Thome says. "Like in the off-season,

*continued, please see **Thome**, page 34*



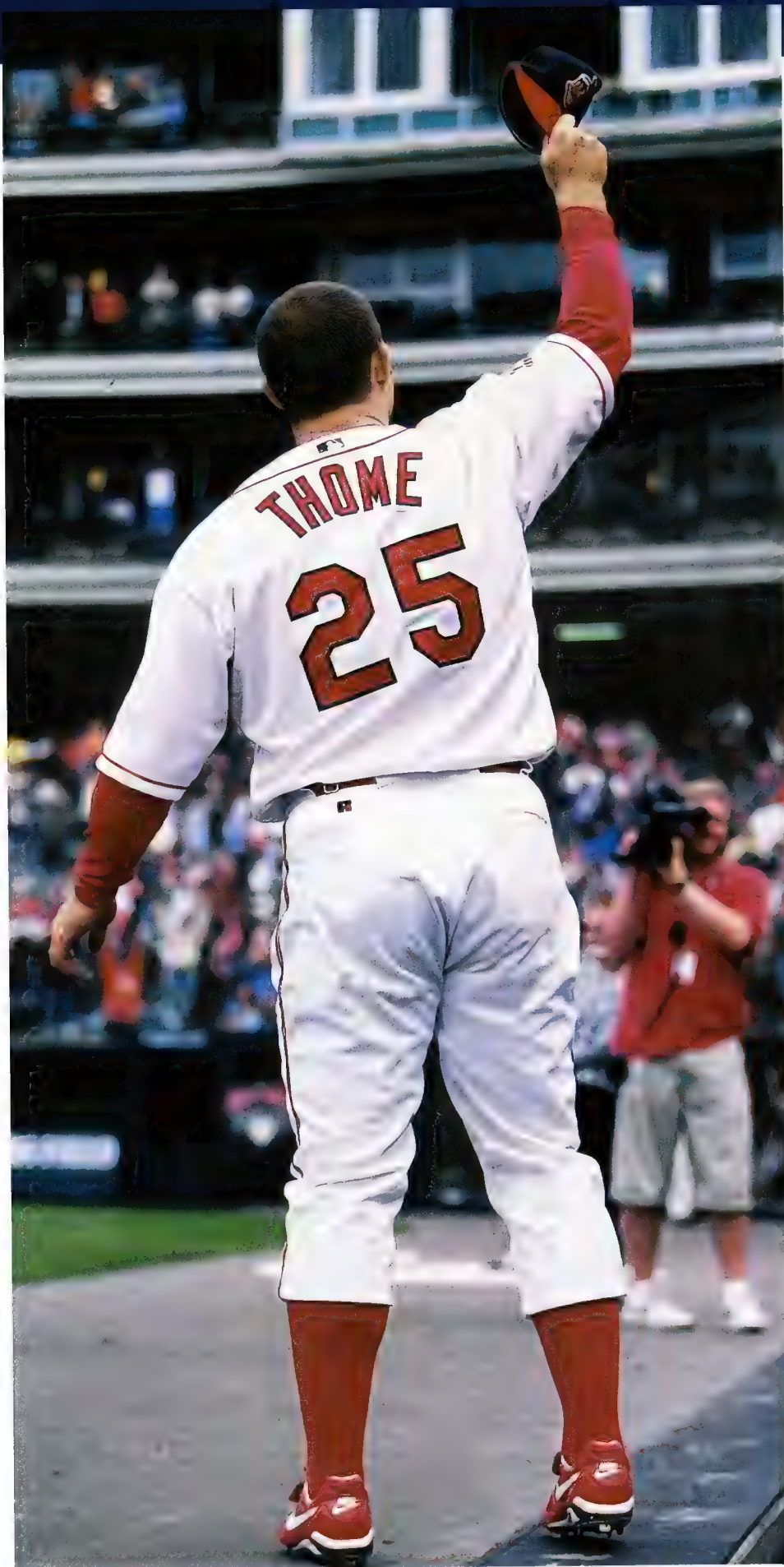


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

## Thome – continued from page 15

I'd sit back in Peoria, having breakfast at this little place I like to go, and take for granted that come spring, it would be the same as it always was.

"It's not like that this year. It was weird coming to Spring Training and seeing the clubhouse. There were a lot of new, young guys. Charlie Nagy and Paul Shuey were there – but not many more faces from the years when we started winning the division.

"I felt like the only survivor. Me and Omar. But that's baseball. We'll be OK, we've got a good team."

In his decade-plus in an Indians uniform, Thome seems to have been Cleveland's own version of Forrest Gump, always right in the middle of memorable events. But unlike Tom Hanks' fictional Forrest Gump, who was more often close to – but never truly involved in – history, Thome has been a major player in the most memorable events of the Indians era of excellence at Jacobs Field.

... Like the longest home run in franchise history – a 511-foot blast off Kansas City's Don Wengert on July 3, 1999 that cleared the Jacobs Field picnic area and bounced through the wrought-iron gate onto Eagle Avenue, far closer to East Ninth Street than to Ontario Street.

"That one I remember like yesterday," Thome says. "My back had been hurting real bad before the game, but I played. That at-bat, I kept getting real good pitches to hit and I said to myself if I got another pitch like the ones I'd been getting, I was going to hit it hard.

"I'd have to say that was the best ball I ever hit in my whole career."

Thome also caught the final out of the game that clinched Cleveland's first post-season appearance in 40 years – a popup off the bat of Cal Ripken, Jr., in September of 1995.

"After I caught it, it was really special. Everybody was going crazy and I caught myself looking into the stands, watching how excited all the people were about what we had done. And I was thinking about how the plan the Indians had came together at that moment – we had a chance to go to the World Series."

And it was during the 1995 World Series that Thome first got a feeling for what he had accomplished as a player. "That's when it hit me – being introduced out there before the (1995) World Series – that I had finally made it. I'm standing there, on the baseline before Game One, and all of a sudden, it hit me, 'Oh, My God! I'm playing in the World Series!'



"That's every player's goal – to play in the World Series. It was my ultimate dream, my ultimate goal. That's when I first felt like a Major Leaguer."

But the fans' memories of Jim Thome's first decade-plus might not always be the same as those of Thome.

"It's strange, but one of the top things I remember about my time with the Indians is being on deck when Eddie Murray got his 3000th hit," Thome says. "At the Metrodome in Minneapolis, it was such a great feeling to see an accomplishment like that. Longevity, durability, those things are important to me."

Thome's more vivid recollections, in addition to his pregame World Series introduction in 1995, include a playoff-game homer against Boston that pushed him past Babe Ruth on the career post-season homers list. But from atop the Indians all-time list of home-run hitters, one more memory stands out – Thome's first career home run.

"October, 1991, near the end of the season," Thome recalls. "I'd been called up in September. I was struggling. I'd eventually be up and down to the Minors before I made it up here to stay."

"It was against the Yankees, at Yankee Stadium. And to show you how much things have changed in 10 years, Joel Skinner – who's now our third base coach – gave me his bat to use (Skinner was then an Indians catcher).

"He told me, 'Look first-ball, fastball. That's what (Steve) Farr likes to do,' so I did. Hit it in the upper deck. Funny, later on, Farr would be a teammate."

Teammate, longevity, durability, loyalty. Those are just a few of the words that have characterized Jim Thome's first decade with the Indians, just as they characterize Thome himself.

"I guess it's my Midwest upbringing," Thome answers when asked about why he is the way he is. "Those are my values. That's just who I am, nothing special."

"I come from a great family. But they never sat me down and said, 'This is how you should act.' They just acted the right way. I know we're role models. I know people want us to be nice to them. I know it means a lot to people if you can just give them a smile, or a 'hello.' I might make their day better."

And from his performance on the field to his attitude off it, there's little wondering why, after more than 10 years, Jim Thome can honestly be called the Indians "Go-To Guy."



Photo: Gregory Drezdson





Jason Giambi



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The highest bidders will have 48 hours to respond to the e-mail notification of their bid selection before the next highest bidder will be awarded the item. Minimum bids for each item will range from \$20 - \$100. All items will include a letter of authenticity.

All proceeds benefit Cleveland Indians Charities which supports youth education and recreation programs in the Greater Cleveland area.

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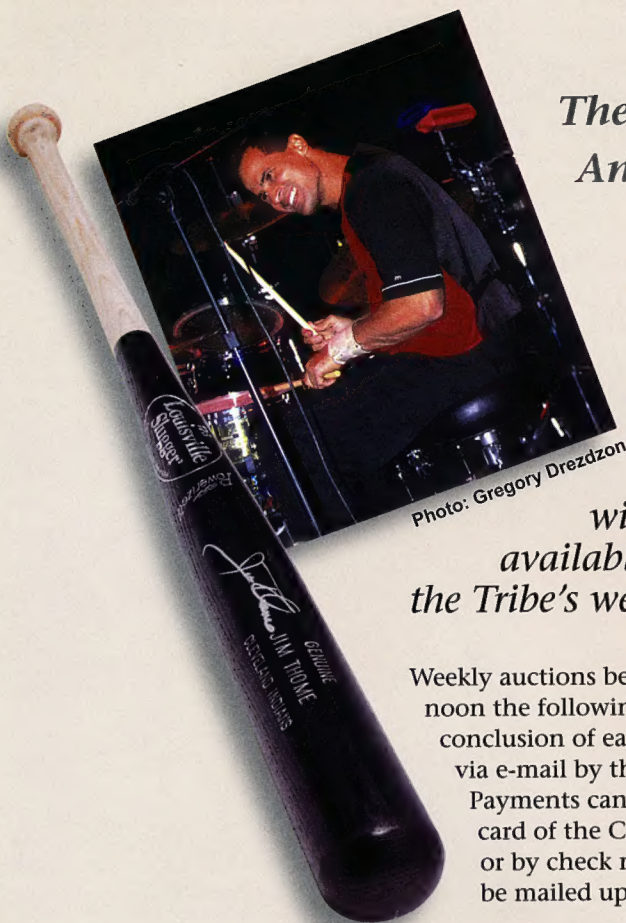
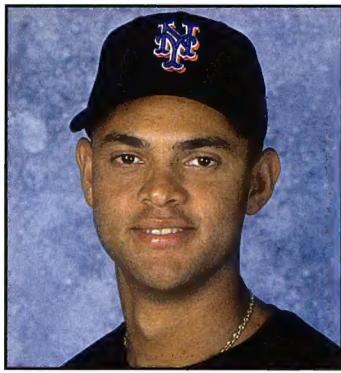


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

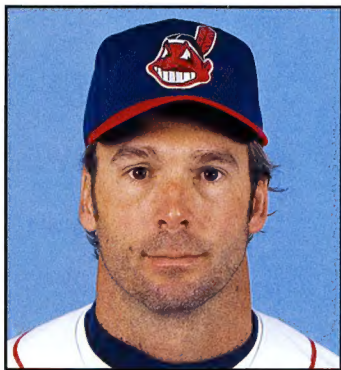






**ALEX ESCOBAR** 46

Age: 23, born September 6, 1978  
in Valencia, Venezuela  
Position: Outfielder  
B-T: R-R Ht: 6'1" Wt: 180



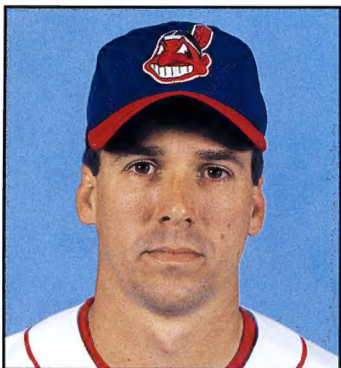
**CHUCK FINLEY** 31

Age: 39, born November 26, 1962  
in Monroe, LA  
Position: Pitcher  
B-T: L-L Ht: 6'6" Wt: 226



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

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**TRAVIS FRYMAN** 17

Age: 32, born March 25, 1969  
in Lexington, KY  
Position: Third Base  
B-T: R-R Ht: 6'1" Wt: 195



**KARIM GARCIA** 24

Age: 25, born October 29, 1975  
in Ciudad Obregon, Mexico  
Position: Outfielder  
B-T: L-L Ht: 6'0" Wt: 195



**RICKY GUTIERREZ** 12

Age: 31, born May 23, 1970  
in Miami, FL  
Position: Infielder  
B-T: R-R Ht: 6'1" Wt: 195



**ALEX HERRERA** 59

Age: 22, born November 5, 1979  
in Maracaibo, Venezuela  
Position: Pitcher  
B-T: L-L Ht: 5'11" Wt: 175



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